

The City of Seattle is proposing

# Station Area Overlay District and Rezones for the Edmunds/Columbia City Light Rail Station Area

The Overlay and rezones are intended to help achieve the neighborhood's vision as a residential community that supports historic Columbia City

## Background and Intent of Overlay District & Rezones

This pamphlet summarizes the intent and features of the Station Area Overlay District (SAOD) and rezones. These actions help to achieve the intent of the Columbia City/Hillman City/Genesee Neighborhood Plan and Edmunds/Columbia City Station Area Planning recommendations. The legislation is intended to accomplish a number of goals that are part of the neighborhood's long-term vision regardless of when light rail service starts.

### Columbia City/Hillman City/Genesee Neighborhood Plan Recommendations for the Station Area

The Columbia City/Hillman City/Genesee Neighborhood Plan, adopted by City Council in 1998 (Resolution #29979), states that this area should remain a primarily residential neighborhood that supports but does not compete with the commercial activity of Historic Columbia City (Key Strategy A1-a). Specific recommendations relating to changes in the Land Use Code include:

- C2-c** Amend commercial zones near the future light rail station to allow for Single-Purpose Residential development.
- C3-f** Support neighborhood community development objectives including the development of housing in the immediate vicinity of the light rail station.

### Concept-Level Recommendations for the Edmunds/Columbia City Station Area

The Concept-Level Station Area Planning Recommendations, adopted in September 2000 by City Council (Resolution #30165), include the following actions for changes to the Land Use Code:

- Establish a Station Area Overlay to prevent development for automobile-oriented uses.
- Ensure protection of existing single family residential areas while encouraging housing and retail development near the station.



New zoning will focus new residential development near the future light rail station.

- Analyze proposed zoning changes to NC1-40 and L-4 to ensure that they are appropriate and support the Rainier Vista redevelopment and the continued revitalization of Columbia City.

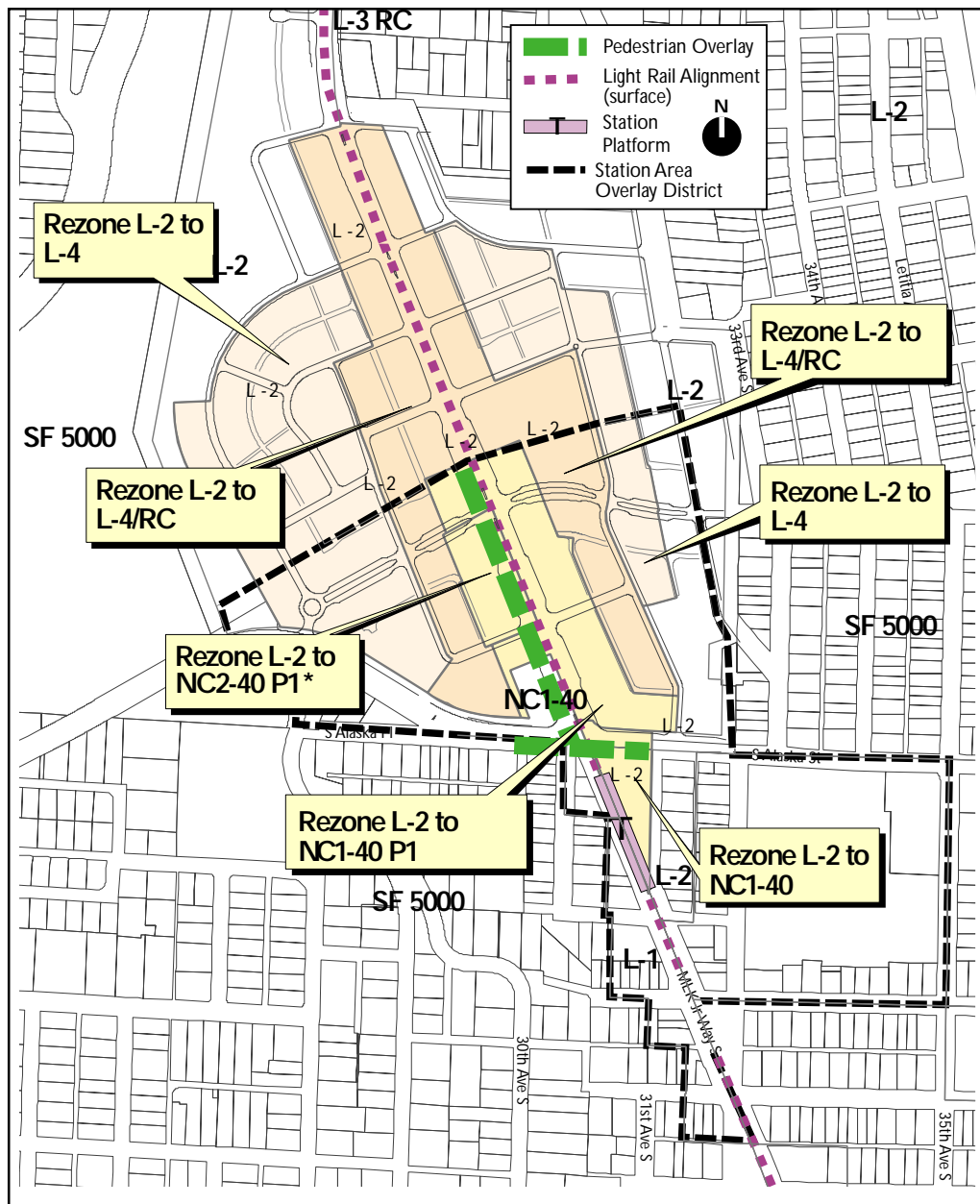
The elements of the SAOD and rezones, when taken together, are intended to discourage auto-oriented development and increase opportunities for housing development that supports historic Columbia City near the future light rail station.

The City will not develop any property in the Edmunds/Columbia City Station Area. This proposal is intended to set a zoning framework for Seattle Housing Authority and other property owners who may redevelop their property in ways that balance neighborhood desires with their own goals.

While Seattle Housing Authority will in large part determine the pace and extent of redevelopment in this station area, this proposal is intended to help the neighborhood achieve its goal as a primarily residential community that supports historic Columbia City.



# Rezone & Overlay District Boundaries



## Existing Zones

### Lowrise 2 (L2)

A variety of multifamily housing types with emphasis on ground-related units but in scale with single-family surroundings.

**Height Limit:** 25 feet

### Neighborhood Commercial (NC1-40\*)

A small pedestrian-oriented shopping area composed primarily of small businesses providing convenience retail sales and services within walking distance of an adjoining residential neighborhood. Residential use is also permitted.

**Height Limit:** 40 feet

\*Seattle Housing Authority (SHA) anticipates developing an area along MLK for an adult daycare use which requires a larger amount of nonresidential space than is allowed in an NC1 zone, and are therefore proposing NC2 zoning in this area. SHA is open to proposing that the City Council place limits on which types of nonresidential uses may take advantage of the larger NC2 size of commercial use.

## Proposed Zones

### Lowrise 4 (L4 and L4/RC)

Moderate density multifamily development in neighborhoods already characterized by moderate density residential structures. RC designation allows for some limited commercial use.

**Height Limit:** 37 feet

These are the kinds of buildings that these zones allow.



Lowrise 2  
(existing zone)



Lowrise 4



Neighborhood Commercial 1



# Rezone Recommendations

Action	Intent <small>(see page 1 for City Council's adopted Neighborhood Plan and Station Area Planning policy direction for these actions)</small>
Rezone central portions of the Rainier Vista site from Lowrise 2 (L2) to Lowrise 4 (L4).	The L4 zoning will provide SHA with greater design flexibility than is available within the L2 or L3 height and density limits. L2 remains at the edges of the SHA site as a transition to single family areas.
Rezone portions of the Rainier Vista site, along Martin Luther King, Jr. Way S from L2 to Lowrise 4/Residential-Commercial (L4/RC).	The L4/RC allows for small scale retail and service uses (particularly home-based occupation) within multifamily buildings to meet residents' needs, while not competing with Columbia City businesses.
Rezone portions of the Rainier Vista site from L2 to Neighborhood Commercial with a 40' height limit (NC1-40 & NC2-40).	NC1-40 allows for a limited amount of commercial use, primarily neighborhood-serving retail sales and service uses close to the light rail station and to meet residents needs, while not competing with Columbia City businesses. Page 2 describes the need for and location of a limited amount of NC2-40 zoning for a daycare facility on a portion of Rainier Vista property.
Add a P1 designation to portions of Martin Luther King Jr Way S, S Alaska St and S Alaska Pl.	The P1 designation within the NC1 area would assure that the street-level commercial uses reinforce the increased pedestrian activity close to the light rail station.

## Overlay District Features

### Supporting Existing Businesses

All existing legal businesses and uses would be allowed to remain and maintain existing structures and sites. For areas of the city where the real estate market may not support new development in the near future, the Station Area Overlay District will allow for a one-time expansion of certain existing businesses made "non-conforming" by the Overlay District. This is an effort to help maintain the viability of businesses that are already established in the SAOD until the market makes redevelopment a more attractive option.

### Shared Parking Provisions

The Station Area Overlay District will allow buildings to provide off-site residential parking by leasing parking on nearby sites. This helps lower the cost of new housing by reducing the amount of on-site parking an individual building must construct and pooling off-site parking resources in the area.

The Station Area Overlay District will allow parking for residential and non-residential uses to be located on a lot in the SAOD and within comfortable walking distance of the lot to which it is accessory. Off-site parking will not be allowed outside of the SAOD and the number of required parking spaces will not be reduced.

## Prohibited Uses

All existing legal businesses and uses are allowed to remain and maintain existing structures and sites. The following types of new development will be prohibited in the Station Area Overlay District:

Principal use long-term non-residential parking	General manufacturing	Warehouse	Vessel repair
Drive-in businesses	Sales, service & rental of commercial equipment & construction materials	Outdoor storage	Marine service station
Vehicle repair	Sale of heating fuel	Sales & rental of motorized vehicles	Salvage & recycling
Towing services	Mini-warehouse	Dry storage of boats	Spectator sports facilities
Car wash		Sales & rental of large boats	Wholesale showroom
Heavy commercial services			Work-release centers





The vision for a vital residential neighborhood that supports the Columbia City business district can best be achieved by increasing flexibility for housing development on commercially-zoned properties. This proposal removes two obstacles from the Land Use Code for housing development.

## Housing Development Flexibility In Commercial Zones: Allowing Single-Purpose Residential Use

As part of the Station Area Overlay District proposal, single-purpose residential structures would be permitted outright in certain locations. Single-purpose residential (SPR) structures are apartment or condominium buildings in commercial zones. These buildings could include housing at the street-level, either permanently or until the market is ready to support more businesses. When the market can support more commercial development, the street-level use could be converted to commercial use.

This proposal provides flexibility and acknowledges market realities for developing either housing or businesses on the ground floors of buildings (on commercially zoned property on the edges of the neighborhood business district). This proposal would apply to all NC zones within the Edmunds/Columbia City Station Area Overlay District, except for those with pedestrian designations (see rezone map on page 2).

## More Housing Without Raising Height Limits: Removing 64% Upper Level Coverage Limits

There are some places in the city where multifamily buildings can use the entire lot area on all levels for residential units. The zoning in Cascade and Belltown neighborhoods allows these kinds of multifamily buildings. This is also the way many of the historic buildings in older Seattle neighborhoods, such as Queen Anne, Columbia City, Ballard, and Georgetown were built.

But in many other places, a coverage limit reduces the area that can be developed for housing on upper levels (64% of the size of the lot for residential buildings in a commercial zone—there is no limit for the size of upper levels for commercial buildings). By removing this "upper-level coverage limit" imposed on residential buildings in station areas, we can help encourage additional housing that is so vital to creating "town centers" and active areas envisioned by Neighborhood Plans, and do it in a way that is working in other parts of the city.

Existing requirements for building setbacks will still apply where residential buildings in commercial zones border residential zones. These required setbacks, along with lowrise building setbacks, promote transition between buildings in different zones. Architectural features such as bays, courtyards, and building details reduce the appearance of the bulk and scale of these buildings, and allow dwelling units access to light and air. These features address one of the main goals of the original 64% upper-level coverage limit.

Also, the required Design Review Program, which was instituted after the upper-level coverage limits were put in place, provides an additional way to address and modify the bulk and scale of new buildings during the design and permitting process.

For more information on the SAOD or rezone proposals for Edmunds, contact Amy Glenn, Strategic Planning Office at (206) 615-0790, [amym.glenn@ci.seattle.wa.us](mailto:amym.glenn@ci.seattle.wa.us)



Example of upper story residential without 64% lot coverage (left) and transition from neighborhood commercial to residential zoning (right).

How could these provisions be used in the Edmunds/Columbia City Station Area?

The map below shows properties that could make use of these provisions. For instance, Seattle Housing Authority (SHA) may make use of the opportunity granted by these provisions to provide additional housing as part of their Rainier Vista redevelopment. SHA could redevelop the properties along MLK Jr. Way with commercial zoning with more housing on upper stories if the 64% upper level coverage limit were removed.

